AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A device for feeding ink prepackaged in containers to the ink duct of printing machines, characterised by comprising a unit for holding the container and for dispensing the ink contained therein, said unit comprising a base provided with at least one through aperture, an intermediate component and an operating head, in which the base, the intermediate component and optionally the operating head define, when in ~~their~~ an operative position, a compartment for receiving the container, and in which the operating head comprises pressing means operated by pressurized fluid to exert a pressure on the container ink to dispense the ink, wherein the operating head and the base of the holding and dispensing unit are movable linearly relative to each other in a given direction ~~it~~.

2. (original) A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the intermediate component comprises two cooperating jaw elements movable relative to each other.

3. (cancelled)

4. (currently amended) A device as claimed in claim [[3]] 1, wherein the holding and dispensing unit can rotate about a first geometrical axis perpendicular to said given direction.

5. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the base comprises a part able to rotate about a second geometrical axis perpendicular both to the given direction and to said first geometrical axis.

6. (currently amended) A device as claimed in claim [[3]] 1, wherein the two cooperating jaw elements can rotate about axes which are parallel to each other and extend in the given direction.

7. (currently amended) A device as claimed in claim [[3]] 1, wherein the operating head can be moved in the given direction and/or be swivelled about a third axis extending in the same direction.

8. (currently amended) A device as claimed in claim [[3]] 1, wherein the holding and dispensing unit comprises a further component which rotatably supports the two jaw elements about at least one axis extending in the given direction.

9. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim

1, wherein the pressing means provided in the operating head are represented by a piston/cylinder unit.

10. (original) A device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the piston is a telescopic piston.

11. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the holding and dispensing unit can be driven with reciprocating movement above the ink duct.

12. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the holding and dispensing unit comprises sensors for determining the quantity of ink in the container and in the ink duct respectively.

13. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein means are provided for automatically feeding one full container at a time into the holding and dispensing unit and for discharging the empty container therefrom.

14. (original) A device as claimed in claim 11, wherein the reciprocating movement of the holding and dispensing unit above the ink duct takes place along rectilinear guide means supported by a stationary bridge structure straddling the ink duct, said stationary structure presenting operating means for

driving said unit with said reciprocating movement.

15. (currently amended) A device ~~as claimed in claim 13~~ for feeding ink prepackaged in containers to the ink duct of printing machines, characterised by comprising a unit for holding the container and for dispensing the ink contained therein, said unit comprising a base provided with at least one through aperture, an intermediate component and an operating head, in which the base, the intermediate component and optionally the operating head define, when in an operative position, a compartment for receiving the container, and in which the operating head comprises pressing means operated by pressurized fluid to exert a pressure on the container ink to dispense the ink,

wherein means are provided for automatically feeding one full container at a time into the holding and dispensing unit and for discharging the empty container therefrom, and

wherein the means for feeding one full container at a time into the holding and dispensing unit and for discharging the empty container comprise: a store for containing a given number of containers and selector means for withdrawing one container at a time from said store.

16. (currently amended) A device ~~as claimed in claim 2,~~ for feeding ink prepackaged in containers to the ink duct of

printing machines, characterised by comprising a unit for holding the container and for dispensing the ink contained therein, said unit comprising a base provided with at least one through aperture, an intermediate component and an operating head, in which the base, the intermediate component and optionally the operating head define, when in an operative position, a compartment for receiving the container, and in which the operating head comprises pressing means operated by pressurized fluid to exert a pressure on the container ink to dispense the ink,

wherein the intermediate component comprises two cooperating jaw elements movable relative to each other, and

wherein the two jaw elements are provided with seats shaped in such a manner as to mate, when applied thereto, with projections present on the operating head and on the base to provide reliable closure of the holding and dispensing unit.

17. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 15, wherein the store is channel-shaped to contain aligned containers, said store being disposed above the ink duct and the holding and dispensing unit, said store having a movable base inclined towards one end of said store where there is present a passage controlled by a selector mechanism which causes one container at a time to fall from said aperture while retaining the other containers.

18. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 15, wherein the store comprises a vertical channel arranged to contain the ink containers disposed horizontally and supported by a selector device which enables one container at a time to leave said channel by falling, the vertical channel communicating with an underlying chamber having an aperture for the entry thereinto of the horizontally positioned holding and dispensing unit, and an outlet for the empty container.

19. (original) A device as claimed in claim 18, wherein the selector device comprises two pairs of profiled levers driven by actuators in such a manner as to assume two different positions, one for arranging a container and the other for releasing said container and for retaining the overlying containers.

20. (currently amended) A device as claimed in claim 15, wherein the store is a revolving drum which is driven from and towards the holding and dispensing unit positioned in front of said unit ~~it~~ to, withdraw the empty container from said unit and to enable withdrawing ~~it to withdraw~~ a full container.

21. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 15, wherein the store is represented by an endless conveyor which by retention means removably retains said containers, which are

released to fall into the holding and dispensing unit when this reaches an underlying position, where said retention means interfere with a stationary release member.